

Through the prophets, he prepared them to accept the salvation destined for all humanity.

- 73 God has revealed himself fully by sending his own Son, in whom he has established his covenant for ever. The Son is his Father's definitive Word; so there will be no further Revelation after him.
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ARTICLE 2

THE TRANSMISSION OF DIVINE REVELATION

- 74 God "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth":²⁹ that is, of Christ Jesus.³⁰ Christ must be
851 proclaimed to all nations and individuals, so that this revelation may reach to the ends of the earth:

God graciously arranged that the things he had once revealed for the salvation of all peoples should remain in their entirety, throughout the ages, and be transmitted to all generations.³¹

I. THE APOSTOLIC TRADITION

- 75 "Christ the Lord, in whom the entire Revelation of the most high God is summed up, commanded the apostles to preach the Gospel, which had been promised beforehand by the prophets, and which he fulfilled in his own person and promulgated with his own lips. In preaching the Gospel, they were to communicate the gifts of God to all men. This Gospel was to be the source of all
171 saving truth and moral discipline."³²

In the apostolic preaching . . .

- 76 In keeping with the Lord's command, the Gospel was handed on in two ways:

— *orally* "by the apostles who handed on, by the spoken word of their preaching, by the example they gave, by the institutions they established, what they themselves had received—whether from the

29 1 Tim 2:4.

30 Cf. Jn 14:6.

31 DV 7; cf. 2 Cor 1:20; 3:16-4:6.

32 DV 7; cf. Mt 28:19-20; Mk 16:15.

lips of Christ, from his way of life and his works, or whether they had learned it at the prompting of the Holy Spirit";³³

— *in writing* "by those apostles and other men associated with the apostles who, under the inspiration of the same Holy Spirit, committed the message of salvation to writing."³⁴

... continued in apostolic succession

77 "In order that the full and living Gospel might always be preserved in the Church the apostles left bishops as their successors. They gave them 'their own position of teaching authority.'"³⁵ 861
Indeed, "the apostolic preaching, which is expressed in a special way in the inspired books, was to be preserved in a continuous line of succession until the end of time."³⁶

78 This living transmission, accomplished in the Holy Spirit, is called Tradition, since it is distinct from Sacred Scripture, though closely connected to it. Through Tradition, "the Church, in her 174 doctrine, life, and worship perpetuates and transmits to every 1124, 2651 generation all that she herself is, all that she believes."³⁷ "The sayings of the holy Fathers are a witness to the life-giving presence of this Tradition, showing how its riches are poured out in the practice and life of the Church, in her belief and her prayer."³⁸

79 The Father's self-communication made through his Word in the Holy Spirit, remains present and active in the Church: "God, who spoke in the past, continues to converse with the Spouse of his beloved Son. And the Holy Spirit, through whom the living voice of the Gospel rings out in the Church—and through her in the world—leads believers to the full truth, and makes the Word of Christ dwell in them in all its richness."³⁹

33 DV 7.

34 DV 7.

35 DV 7 § 2; St. Irenaeus, *Adv. haeres.* 3, 3, 1: PG 7, 848; Harvey, 2, 9.

36 DV 8 § 1.

37 DV 8 § 1.

38 DV 8 § 3.

39 DV 8 § 3; cf. Col 3:16.

II. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRADITION AND SACRED SCRIPTURE

One common source . . .

80 "Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture, then, are bound closely together and communicate one with the other. For both of them, flowing out from the same divine well-spring, come together in some fashion to form one thing and move towards the same goal."⁴⁰ Each of them makes present and fruitful in the Church the mystery of Christ, who promised to remain with his own "always, to the close of the age."⁴¹

. . . two distinct modes of transmission

81 "*Sacred Scripture* is the speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit."⁴²

113 "And [Holy] *Tradition* transmits in its entirety the Word of God which has been entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit. It transmits it to the successors of the apostles so that, enlightened by the Spirit of truth, they may faithfully preserve, expound, and spread it abroad by their preaching."⁴³

82 As a result the Church, to whom the transmission and interpretation of Revelation is entrusted, "does not derive her certainty about all revealed truths from the holy Scriptures alone. Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honored with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence."⁴⁴

Apostolic Tradition and ecclesial traditions

83 The Tradition here in question comes from the apostles and hands on what they received from Jesus' teaching and example and what they learned from the Holy Spirit. The first generation of Christians did not yet have a written New Testament, and the New Testament itself demonstrates the process of living Tradition.

1202, 2041 Tradition is to be distinguished from the various theological,
2684 disciplinary, liturgical, or devotional traditions, born in the local churches over time. These are the particular forms, adapted to different places and

40 DV 9.

41 Mt 28:20.

42 DV 9.

43 DV 9.

44 DV 9.

times, in which the great Tradition is expressed. In the light of Tradition, these traditions can be retained, modified or even abandoned under the guidance of the Church's magisterium.

III. THE INTERPRETATION OF THE HERITAGE OF FAITH

The heritage of faith entrusted to the whole of the Church

84 The apostles entrusted the "Sacred deposit" of the faith (the *depositum fidei*),⁴⁵ contained in Sacred Scripture and Tradition, to the whole of the Church. "By adhering to [this heritage] the entire holy people, united to its pastors, remains always faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the brotherhood, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. So, in maintaining, practicing, and professing the faith that has been handed on, there should be a remarkable harmony between the bishops and the faithful."⁴⁶ 857, 871 2033

The Magisterium of the Church

85 "The task of giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of Tradition, has been entrusted to the living, teaching office of the Church alone. Its authority in this matter is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ."⁴⁷ This means that the task of interpretation has been entrusted to the bishops in communion with the successor of Peter, the Bishop of Rome. 888-892 2032-2040

86 "Yet this Magisterium is not superior to the Word of God, but is its servant. It teaches only what has been handed on to it. At the divine command and with the help of the Holy Spirit, it listens to this devotedly, guards it with dedication, and expounds it faithfully. All that it proposes for belief as being divinely revealed is drawn from this single deposit of faith."⁴⁸ 688

87 Mindful of Christ's words to his apostles: "He who hears you, hears me,"⁴⁹ the faithful receive with docility the teachings and directives that their pastors give them in different forms. 1548 2037

45 DV 10 § 1; cf. 1 Tim 6:20; 2 Tim 1:12-14 (Vulg.).

46 DV 10 § 1; cf. Acts 2:42 (Gk.); Pius XII, apostolic constitution, *Munificentissimus Deus*, November 1, 1950: AAS 42 (1950), 756, taken along with the words of St. Cyprian, *Epist.* 66, 8: CSEL 3, 2, 733: "The Church is the people united to its Priests, the flock adhering to its Shepherd."

47 DV 10 § 2.

48 DV 10 § 2.

49 Lk 10:16; cf. LG 20.

The dogmas of the faith

888-892 88 The Church's Magisterium exercises the authority it holds
2032-2040 from Christ to the fullest extent when it defines dogmas, that is,
when it proposes, in a form obliging the Christian people to an
irrevocable adherence of faith, truths contained in divine Revelation
or also when it proposes, in a definitive way, truths having a
necessary connection with these.

89 There is an organic connection between our spiritual life
2625 and the dogmas. Dogmas are lights along the path of faith; they
illuminate it and make it secure. Conversely, if our life is upright,
our intellect and heart will be open to welcome the light shed by
the dogmas of faith.⁵⁰

90 The mutual connections between dogmas, and their coher-
ence, can be found in the whole of the Revelation of the mystery of
114, 158 Christ.⁵¹ "In Catholic doctrine there exists an order or 'hierarchy'
234 of truths, since they vary in their relation to the foundation of the
Christian faith."⁵²

The supernatural sense of faith

91 All the faithful share in understanding and handing on
737 revealed truth. They have received the anointing of the Holy Spirit,
who instructs them⁵³ and guides them into all truth.⁵⁴

92 "The whole body of the faithful . . . cannot err in matters
of belief. This characteristic is shown in the supernatural apprecia-
785 tion of faith (*sensus fidei*) on the part of the whole people, when,
'from the bishops to the last of the faithful,' they manifest a univer-
sal consent in matters of faith and morals."⁵⁵

93 "By this appreciation of the faith, aroused and sustained
by the Spirit of truth, the People of God, guided by the sacred
889 teaching authority (*Magisterium*), . . . receives . . . the faith, once for
all delivered to the saints. . . . The People unfailingly adheres to this
faith, penetrates it more deeply with right judgment, and applies
it more fully in daily life."⁵⁶

50 Cf. *Jn* 8:31-32.

51 Cf. Vatican Council I: DS 3016: *nexus mysteriorum*; LG 25.

52 UR 11.

53 Cf. 1 *Jn* 2:20, 27.

54 Cf. *Jn* 16:13.

55 LG 12; cf. St. Augustine, *De praed. sanct.* 14, 27: PL 44, 980.

56 LG 12; cf. *Jude* 3.

Growth in understanding the faith

94 Thanks to the assistance of the Holy Spirit, the understanding of both the realities and the words of the heritage of faith 66 is able to grow in the life of the Church:

— “through the contemplation and study of believers who ponder 2651 these things in their hearts”;⁵⁷ it is in particular “theological research [which] deepens knowledge of revealed truth.”⁵⁸

— “from the intimate sense of spiritual realities which [believers] 2038, 2518 experience,”⁵⁹ the sacred Scriptures “grow with the one who reads them.”⁶⁰

— “from the preaching of those who have received, along with their right of succession in the episcopate, the sure charism of truth.”⁶¹

95 “It is clear therefore that, in the supremely wise arrangement of God, sacred Tradition, Sacred Scripture, and the Magisterium of the Church are so connected and associated that one of them cannot stand without the others. Working together, each in its own way, under the action of the one Holy Spirit, they all contribute effectively to the salvation of souls.”⁶²

IN BRIEF

96 What Christ entrusted to the apostles, they in turn handed on by their preaching and writing, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to all generations, until Christ returns in glory.

97 “Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture make up a single sacred deposit of the Word of God” (DV 10), in which, as in a mirror, the pilgrim Church contemplates God, the source of all her riches.

98 “The Church, in her doctrine, life, and worship, perpetuates and transmits to every generation all that she herself is, all that she believes” (DV 8 §1).

57 DV 8 § 2; cf. Lk 2:19, 51.

58 GS 62 § 7; cf. GS 44 § 2; DV 23, 24; UR 4.

59 DV 8 § 2.

60 St. Gregory the Great, *Hom. in Ez.* 1, 7, 8: PL 76, 843 D.

61 DV 8 § 2.

62 DV 10 § 3.

- 99 Thanks to its supernatural sense of faith, the People of God as a whole never ceases to welcome, to penetrate more deeply, and to live more fully from the gift of divine Revelation.
- 100 The task of interpreting the Word of God authentically has been entrusted solely to the Magisterium of the Church, that is, to the Pope and to the bishops in communion with him.
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ARTICLE 3

SACRED SCRIPTURE

I. CHRIST—THE UNIQUE WORD OF SACRED SCRIPTURE

- 101 In order to reveal himself to men, in the condescension of his goodness God speaks to them in human words: "Indeed the words of God, expressed in the words of men, are in every way like human language, just as the Word of the eternal Father, when he took on himself the flesh of human weakness, became like men."⁶³
- 65, 2763 102 Through all the words of Sacred Scripture, God speaks only one single Word, his one Utterance in whom he expresses himself completely:⁶⁴
- 426-429 You recall that one and the same Word of God extends throughout Scripture, that it is one and the same Utterance that resounds in the mouths of all the sacred writers, since he who was in the beginning God with God has no need of separate syllables; for he is not subject to time.⁶⁵
- 1100, 1184 103 For this reason, the Church has always venerated the Scriptures as she venerates the Lord's Body. She never ceases to present to the faithful the bread of life, taken from the one table of 1378 God's Word and Christ's Body.⁶⁶
- 104 In Sacred Scripture, the Church constantly finds her nourishment and her strength, for she welcomes it not as a human word, "but as what it really is, the word of God."⁶⁷ "In the sacred books,

63 DV 13.

64 Cf. *Heb* 1:1-3.

65 St. Augustine, *En. in Ps.* 103, 4, 1: PL 37, 1378; cf. *Ps* 104; *Jn* 1:1.

66 Cf. DV 21.

67 *1 Thess* 2:13; cf. DV 24.

the Father who is in heaven comes lovingly to meet his children, and talks with them."⁶⁸

II. INSPIRATION AND TRUTH OF SACRED SCRIPTURE

105 *God is the author of Sacred Scripture.* "The divinely revealed realities, which are contained and presented in the text of Sacred Scripture, have been written down under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit."⁶⁹

"For Holy Mother Church, relying on the faith of the apostolic age, accepts as sacred and canonical the books of the Old and the New Testaments, whole and entire, with all their parts, on the grounds that, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they have God as their author and have been handed on as such to the Church herself."⁷⁰

106 God inspired the human authors of the sacred books. "To compose the sacred books, God chose certain men who, all the while he employed them in this task, made full use of their own faculties and powers so that, though he acted in them and by them, it was as true authors that they consigned to writing whatever he wanted written, and no more."⁷¹

107 The inspired books teach the truth. "Since therefore all that the inspired authors or sacred writers affirm should be regarded as affirmed by the Holy Spirit, we must acknowledge that the books of Scripture firmly, faithfully, and without error teach that truth 702 which God, for the sake of our salvation, wished to see confided to the Sacred Scriptures."⁷²

108 Still, the Christian faith is not a "religion of the book." Christianity is the religion of the "Word" of God, a word which is "not a written and mute word, but the Word which is incarnate and living."⁷³ If the Scriptures are not to remain a dead letter, Christ, the eternal Word of the living God, must, through the Holy Spirit, "open [our] minds to understand the Scriptures."⁷⁴

68 DV 21.

69 DV 11.

70 DV 11; cf. *Jn* 20:31; 2 *Tim* 3:16; 2 *Pet* 1:19-21; 3:15-16.

71 DV 11.

72 DV 11.

73 St. Bernard, *S. missus est hom.* 4, 11: PL 183, 86.

74 Cf. *Lk* 24:45.

III. THE HOLY SPIRIT, INTERPRETER OF SCRIPTURE

109 In Sacred Scripture, God speaks to man in a human way. To interpret Scripture correctly, the reader must be attentive to what the human authors truly wanted to affirm and to what God wanted to reveal to us by their words.⁷⁵

110 In order to discover *the sacred authors' intention*, the reader must take into account the conditions of their time and culture, the literary genres in use at that time, and the modes of feeling, speaking, and narrating then current. "For the fact is that truth is differently presented and expressed in the various types of historical writing, in prophetic and poetical texts, and in other forms of literary expression."⁷⁶

111 But since Sacred Scripture is inspired, there is another and no less important principle of correct interpretation, without which Scripture would remain a dead letter. "Sacred Scripture must be read and interpreted in the light of the same Spirit by whom it was written."⁷⁷

The Second Vatican Council indicates three criteria for interpreting Scripture in accordance with the Spirit who inspired it.⁷⁸

112 1. *Be especially attentive "to the content and unity of the whole Scripture."* Different as the books which comprise it may be, Scripture is a unity by reason of the unity of God's plan, of which Christ
128 Jesus is the center and heart, open since his Passover.⁷⁹
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The phrase "heart of Christ" can refer to Sacred Scripture, which makes known his heart, closed before the Passion, as the Scripture was obscure. But the Scripture has been opened since the Passion; since those who from then on have understood it, consider and discern in what way the prophecies must be interpreted.⁸⁰

113 2. *Read the Scripture within "the living Tradition of the whole Church."* According to a saying of the Fathers, Sacred Scripture is
81 written principally in the Church's heart rather than in documents and records, for the Church carries in her Tradition the living memorial of God's Word, and it is the Holy Spirit who gives her

75 Cf. DV 12 § 1.

76 DV 12 § 2.

77 DV 12 § 3.

78 Cf. DV 12 § 4.

79 Cf. Lk 24:25-27, 44-46.

80 St. Thomas Aquinas, *Expos. in Ps* 21,11; cf. *Ps* 22:15.

the spiritual interpretation of the Scripture ("according to the spiritual meaning which the Spirit grants to the Church"⁸¹).

114 3. *Be attentive to the analogy of faith.*⁸² By "analogy of faith" 90 we mean the coherence of the truths of faith among themselves and within the whole plan of Revelation.

The senses of Scripture

115 According to an ancient tradition, one can distinguish between two *senses* of Scripture: the literal and the spiritual, the latter being subdivided into the allegorical, moral, and anagogical senses. The profound concordance of the four senses guarantees all its richness to the living reading of Scripture in the Church.

116 The *literal sense* is the meaning conveyed by the words of Scripture and discovered by exegesis, following the rules of sound interpretation: "All other senses of Sacred Scripture are based on the literal."⁸³ 110-114

117 The *spiritual sense*. Thanks to the unity of God's plan, not only the text of Scripture but also the realities and events about which it speaks 1101 can be signs.

1. The *allegorical sense*. We can acquire a more profound understanding of events by recognizing their significance in Christ; thus the crossing of the Red Sea is a sign or type of Christ's victory and also of Christian Baptism.⁸⁴

2. The *moral sense*. The events reported in Scripture ought to lead us to act justly. As St. Paul says, they were written "for our instruction."⁸⁵

3. The *anagogical sense* (Greek: *anagoge*, "leading"). We can view realities and events in terms of their eternal significance, leading us toward our true homeland: thus the Church on earth is a sign of the heavenly Jerusalem.⁸⁶

118 A medieval couplet summarizes the significance of the four senses:

The Letter speaks of deeds; Allegory to faith;
The Moral how to act; Anagogy our destiny.⁸⁷

119 "It is the task of exegetes to work, according to these rules, toward a better understanding and explanation of the meaning of Sacred Scripture in order that their research may help the Church 94

81 Origen, *Hom. in Lev.* 5, 5: PG 12, 454D.

82 Cf. *Rom* 12:6.

83 St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* I, 1, 10, *ad* 1.

84 Cf. *1 Cor* 10:2.

85 *1 Cor* 10:11; cf. *Heb* 3-4:11.

86 Cf. *Rev* 21:1-22:5.

87 *Littera gesta docet, quid credas allegoria, moralis quid agas, quo tendas anagogia.* Augustine of Dacia, *Rotulus pugillaris*, I: ed. A. Walz: Angelicum 6 (1929) 256.

to form a firmer judgment. For, of course, all that has been said about the manner of interpreting Scripture is ultimately subject to the judgment of the Church which exercises the divinely conferred commission and ministry of watching over and interpreting the Word of God.”⁸⁸

- 113 But I would not believe in the Gospel, had not the authority of the Catholic Church already moved me.⁸⁹

IV. THE CANON OF SCRIPTURE

- 1117 120 It was by the apostolic Tradition that the Church discerned which writings are to be included in the list of the sacred books.⁹⁰ This complete list is called the canon of Scripture. It includes 46 books for the Old Testament (45 if we count Jeremiah and Lamentations as one) and 27 for the New.⁹¹

The Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah, Tobit, Judith, Esther, 1 and 2 Maccabees, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Songs, the Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Baruch, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

The New Testament: the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, the Acts of the Apostles, the Letters of St. Paul to the Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, the Letter to the Hebrews, the Letters of James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2, and 3 John, and Jude, and Revelation (the Apocalypse).

The Old Testament

- 1093 121 The Old Testament is an indispensable part of Sacred Scripture. Its books are divinely inspired and retain a permanent value,⁹² for the Old Covenant has never been revoked.
- 702, 763 122 Indeed, “the economy of the Old Testament was deliberately so oriented that it should prepare for and declare in prophecy the coming of Christ, redeemer of all men.”⁹³ “Even though they contain matters imperfect and provisional,”⁹⁴ the books of the Old
- 708 Testament bear witness to the whole divine pedagogy of God’s

88 DV 12 § 3.

89 St. Augustine, *Contra epistolam Manichaei*, 5, 6: PL 42, 176.

90 Cf. DV 8 § 3.

91 Cf. Council of Trent: DS 179; 1334-1336; 1501-1504.

92 Cf. DV 14.

93 DV 15.

94 DV 15.

saving love: these writings “are a storehouse of sublime teaching on God and of sound wisdom on human life, as well as a wonderful treasury of prayers; in them, too, the mystery of our salvation is present in a hidden way.”⁹⁵ 2568

123 Christians venerate the Old Testament as true Word of God. The Church has always vigorously opposed the idea of rejecting the Old Testament under the pretext that the New has rendered it void (Marcionism).

The New Testament

124 “The Word of God, which is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, is set forth and displays its power in a most wonderful way in the writings of the New Testament”⁹⁶ which hand on the ultimate truth of God’s Revelation. Their central object is Jesus Christ, God’s incarnate Son: his acts, teachings, Passion and glorification, and his Church’s beginnings under the Spirit’s guidance.⁹⁷

125 The *Gospels* are the heart of all the Scriptures “because they are our principal source for the life and teaching of the Incarnate Word, our Savior.”⁹⁸ 515

126 We can distinguish three stages in the formation of the Gospels:

1. *The life and teaching of Jesus.* The Church holds firmly that the four Gospels, “whose historicity she unhesitatingly affirms, faithfully hand on what Jesus, the Son of God, while he lived among men, really did and taught for their eternal salvation, until the day when he was taken up.”⁹⁹

2. *The oral tradition.* “For, after the ascension of the Lord, the apostles handed on to their hearers what he had said and done, but with that fuller understanding which they, instructed by the glorious events of Christ and enlightened by the Spirit of truth, now enjoyed.”¹⁰⁰ 76

3. *The written Gospels.* “The sacred authors, in writing the four Gospels, selected certain of the many elements which had been handed on, either orally or already in written form; others they synthesized or explained with an eye to the situation of the churches, while sustaining the 76

95 DV 15.

96 DV 17; cf. *Rom* 1:16.

97 Cf. DV 20.

98 DV 18.

99 DV 19; cf. *Acts* 1:1-2.

100 DV 19.

form of preaching, but always in such a fashion that they have told us the honest truth about Jesus."¹⁰¹

1154 **127** The fourfold Gospel holds a unique place in the Church, as is evident both in the veneration which the liturgy accords it and in the surpassing attraction it has exercised on the saints at all times:

There is no doctrine which could be better, more precious and more splendid than the text of the Gospel. Behold and retain what our Lord and Master, Christ, has taught by his words and accomplished by his deeds.¹⁰²

2705 But above all it's the Gospels that occupy my mind when I'm at prayer; my poor soul has so many needs, and yet this is the one thing needful. I'm always finding fresh lights there, hidden and enthralling meanings.¹⁰³

The unity of the Old and New Testaments

128 The Church, as early as apostolic times,¹⁰⁴ and then constantly in her Tradition, has illuminated the unity of the divine plan in the two Testaments through typology, which discerns in God's
1094 works of the Old Covenant prefigurations of what he accom-
489 plished in the fullness of time in the person of his incarnate Son.

129 Christians therefore read the Old Testament in the light of Christ crucified and risen. Such typological reading discloses the
681 inexhaustible content of the Old Testament; but it must not make us forget that the Old Testament retains its own intrinsic value as Revelation reaffirmed by our Lord himself.¹⁰⁵ Besides, the New
2055 Testament has to be read in the light of the Old. Early Christian catechesis made constant use of the Old Testament.¹⁰⁶ As an old saying put it, the New Testament lies hidden in the Old and the
1968 Old Testament is unveiled in the New.¹⁰⁷

130 Typology indicates the dynamic movement toward the fulfillment of the divine plan when "God [will] be everything to everyone."¹⁰⁸ Nor do the calling of the patriarchs and the exodus from Egypt, for example, lose their own value in God's plan, from the mere fact that they were intermediate stages.

101 DV 19.

102 St. Caesaria the Younger to St. Richildis and St. Radegunde, *SCh* 345, 480.

103 St. Thérèse of Lisieux, *ms. autob.* A 83v.

104 Cf. 1 Cor 10:6, 11; Heb 10:1; 1 Pet 3:21.

105 Cf. Mk 12:29-31.

106 Cf. 1 Cor 5:6-8; 10:1-11.

107 Cf. St. Augustine, *Quaest. in Hept.* 2, 73: PL 34, 623; cf. DV 16.

108 1 Cor 15:28.

V. SACRED SCRIPTURE IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

131 “And such is the force and power of the Word of God that it can serve the Church as her support and vigor and the children of the Church as strength for their faith, food for the soul, and a pure and lasting font of spiritual life.”¹⁰⁹ Hence “access to Sacred Scripture ought to be open wide to the Christian faithful.”¹¹⁰

132 “Therefore, the ‘study of the sacred page’ should be the very soul of sacred theology. The ministry of the Word, too—pastoral preaching, catechetics, and all forms of Christian instruction, among which the liturgical homily should hold pride of place—is healthily nourished and thrives in holiness through the Word of Scripture.”¹¹¹ 94

133 The Church “forcefully and specifically exhorts all the Christian faithful . . . to learn ‘the surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ,’ by frequent reading of the divine Scriptures. ‘Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ.’”¹¹² 2653 1792

IN BRIEF

- 134 All Sacred Scripture is but one book, and this one book is Christ, “because all divine Scripture speaks of Christ, and all divine Scripture is fulfilled in Christ” (Hugh of St. Victor, *De arca Noe* 2, 8: PL 176, 642: cf. *ibid.* 2, 9: PL 176, 642-643).
- 135 “The Sacred Scriptures contain the Word of God and, because they are inspired they are truly the Word of God” (*DV* 24).
- 136 God is the author of Sacred Scripture because he inspired its human authors; he acts in them and by means of them. He thus gives assurance that their writings teach without error his saving truth (cf. *DV* 11).
- 137 Interpretation of the inspired Scripture must be attentive above all to what God wants to reveal through the sacred authors for our salvation. What comes from the

109 *DV* 21.

110 *DV* 22.

111 *DV* 24.

112 *DV* 25; cf. *Phil* 3:8 and St. Jerome, *Commentariorum in Isaiam libri xviii* prol.: PL 24, 17b.

Spirit is not fully “understood except by the Spirit’s action” (cf. Origen, *Hom. in Ex.* 4, 5: PG 12, 320).

- 138 The Church accepts and venerates as inspired the 46 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New.
 - 139 The four Gospels occupy a central place because Christ Jesus is their center.
 - 140 The unity of the two Testaments proceeds from the unity of God’s plan and his Revelation. The Old Testament prepares for the New and the New Testament fulfills the Old; the two shed light on each other; both are true Word of God.
 - 141 “The Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures as she venerated the Body of the Lord” (*DV* 21): both nourish and govern the whole Christian life. “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (*Psa* 119:105; cf. *Isa* 50:4).
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